

# Glossary

## Cybersecurity



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### Terms and definitions from Course 5

#### A

**Access controls:** Security controls that manage access, authorization, and accountability of information

**Adware:** A type of legitimate software that is sometimes used to display digital advertisements in applications

**Advanced persistent threat (APT):** An instance when a threat actor maintains unauthorized access to a system for an extended period of time

**Algorithm:** A set of rules used to solve a problem

**Angler phishing:** A technique where attackers impersonate customer service representatives on social media

**Application programming interface (API) token:** A small block of encrypted code that contains information about a user

**Asset:** An item perceived as having value to an organization

**Asset classification:** The practice of labeling assets based on sensitivity and importance to an organization

**Asset inventory:** A catalog of assets that need to be protected

**Asset management:** The process of tracking assets and the risks that affect them

**Asymmetric encryption:** The use of a public and private key pair for encryption and decryption of data

**Attack surface:** The characteristics and features of the areas where an attack can come from

**Attack tree:** A diagram that maps threats to assets

**Attack vector:** The pathways attackers use to penetrate security defenses

## B

**Baiting:** A social engineering tactic that tempts people into compromising their security

**Basic auth:** The technology used to establish a user's request to access a server

**Bit:** The smallest unit of data measurement on a computer

**Botnet:** A collection of computers infected by malware that are under the control of a single threat actor, known as the "bot-herder"

**Brute force attack:** The trial and error process of discovering private information

**Bug bounty:** Programs that encourage freelance hackers to find and report vulnerabilities

## C

**Cipher:** An algorithm that encrypts information

**Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures (CVE®) list:** An openly accessible dictionary of known vulnerabilities and exposures

**Common Vulnerability Scoring System (CVSS):** A measurement system that scores the severity of a vulnerability

**Compliance:** The process of adhering to internal standards and external regulations

**Computer virus:** see "virus"

**Cross-site scripting (XSS):** An injection attack that inserts code into a vulnerable website or web application

**Cryptojacking:** A form of malware that installs software to illegally mine cryptocurrencies

**Cryptographic key:** A mechanism that decrypts ciphertext

**Cryptography:** The process of transforming information into a form that unintended readers can't understand

**CVE Numbering Authority (CNA):** An organization that volunteers to analyze and distribute information on eligible CVEs

## D

**Data:** Information that is translated, processed, or stored by a computer

**Data at rest:** Data not currently being accessed

**Data in transit:** Data traveling from one point to another

**Data in use:** Data being accessed by one or more users

**Data custodian:** Anyone or anything that's responsible for the safe handling, transport, and storage of information

**Data owner:** The person that decides who can access, edit, use, or destroy their information

**Defense in depth:** A layered approach to vulnerability management that reduces risk

**Digital certificate:** A file that verifies the identity of a public key holder

**DOM-based XSS attack:** An instance when malicious script exists in the webpage a browser loads

**Dropper:** A type of malware that comes packed with malicious code which is delivered and installed onto a target system

## E

**Encryption:** The process of converting data from a readable format to an encoded format

**Exploit:** A way of taking advantage of a vulnerability

**Exposure:** A mistake that can be exploited by a threat

## F

**Fileless malware:** Malware that does not need to be installed by the user because it uses legitimate programs that are already installed to infect a computer

## H

**Hacker:** Any person who uses computers to gain access to computer systems, networks, or data

**Hash collision:** An instance when different inputs produce the same hash value

**Hash function:** An algorithm that produces a code that can't be decrypted

**Hash table:** A data structure that's used to store and reference hash values

## I

**Identity and access management (IAM):** A collection of processes and technologies that helps organizations manage digital identities in their environment

**Information privacy:** The protection of unauthorized access and distribution of data

**Information security (InfoSec):** The practice of keeping data in all states away from unauthorized users

**Injection attack:** Malicious code inserted into a vulnerable application

**Input validation:** Programming that validates inputs from users and other programs

**Intrusion detection system (IDS):** An application that monitors system activity and alerts on possible intrusions

## L

**Loader:** A type of malware that downloads strains of malicious code from an external source and installs them onto a target system

## M

**Malware:** Software designed to harm devices or networks

**MITRE:** A collection of non-profit research and development centers

**Multi-factor authentication (MFA):** A technology that requires at least two distinct forms of identification

## N

**National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Framework (CSF):** A voluntary framework that consists of standards, guidelines, and best practices to manage cybersecurity risk

**Non-repudiation:** The concept that the authenticity of information can't be denied

## O

**OAuth:** An open-standard authorization protocol that shares designated access between applications

## P

**Process of Attack Simulation and Threat Analysis (PASTA):** A popular threat modeling framework that's used across many industries

**Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS):** A set of security standards formed by major organizations in the financial industry

**Personally identifiable information (PII):** Any information used to infer an individual's identity

**Phishing:** The use of digital communications to trick people into revealing sensitive data or deploying malicious software

**Phishing kit:** A collection of software tools needed to launch a phishing campaign

**Policy:** A set of rules that reduce risk and protect information

**Potentially unwanted application (PUA):** A type of unwanted software that is bundled in with legitimate programs which might display ads, cause device slowdown, or install other software

**Prepared statement:** A coding technique that executes SQL statements before passing them onto the database

**Principle of least privilege:** The concept of granting only the minimal access and authorization required to complete a task or function

**Procedures:** Step-by-step instructions to perform a specific security task

**Protected health information (PHI):** Information that relates to the past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition of an individual

**Public key infrastructure (PKI):** An encryption framework that secures the exchange of online information

## Q

**Quid pro quo:** A type of baiting used to trick someone into believing that they'll be rewarded in return for sharing access, information, or money

## R

**Rainbow table:** A file of pre-generated hash values and their associated plaintext

**Ransomware:** Type of malicious attack where attackers encrypt an organization's data and demand payment to restore access

**Regulations:** Rules set by a government or other authority to control the way something is done

**Reflected XSS attack:** An instance when malicious script is sent to a server and activated during the server's response

**Risk:** Anything that can impact confidentiality, integrity, or availability of an asset

**Rootkit:** Malware that provides remote, administrative access to a computer

## S

**Salting:** An additional safeguard that's used to strengthen hash functions

**Scareware:** Malware that employs tactics to frighten users into infecting their device

**Security assessment:** A check to determine how resilient current security implementations are against threats

**Security audit:** A review of an organization's security controls, policies, and procedures against a set of expectations

**Security controls:** Safeguards designed to reduce specific security risks

**Security hardening:** The process of strengthening a system to reduce its vulnerability and attack surface

**Separation of duties:** The principle that users should not be given levels of authorization that would allow them to misuse a system

**Session:** A sequence of network HTTP basic auth requests and responses associated with the same user

**Session cookie:** A token that websites use to validate a session and determine how long that session should last

**Session hijacking:** An event when attackers obtain a legitimate user's session ID

**Session ID:** A unique token that identifies a user and their device while accessing a system

**Single sign-on (SSO):** A technology that combines several different logins into one

**Smishing:** The use of text messages to trick users to obtain sensitive information or to impersonate a known source

**Social engineering:** A manipulation technique that exploits human error to gain private information, access, or valuables

**Spear phishing:** A malicious email attack targeting a specific user or group of users, appearing to originate from a trusted source

**Spyware:** Malware that's used to gather and sell information without consent

**SQL (Structured Query Language):** A programming language used to create, interact with, and request information from a database

**SQL injection:** An attack that executes unexpected queries on a database

**Standards:** References that inform how to set policies

**Stored XSS attack:** An instance when a malicious script is injected directly on the server

**SQL (Structured Query Language):** A programming language used to create, interact with, and request information from a database

**Symmetric encryption:** The use of a single secret key to exchange information

## T

**Tailgating:** A social engineering tactic in which unauthorized people follow an authorized person into a restricted area

**Threat:** Any circumstance or event that can negatively impact assets

**Threat actor:** Any person or group who presents a security risk

**Threat modeling:** The process of identifying assets, their vulnerabilities, and how each is exposed to threats

**Trojan horse:** Malware that looks like a legitimate file or program

## U

**User provisioning:** The process of creating and maintaining a user's digital identity

## V

**Virus:** Malicious code written to interfere with computer operations and cause damage to data and software

**Vishing:** The exploitation of electronic voice communication to obtain sensitive information or to impersonate a known source

**Vulnerability:** A weakness that can be exploited by a threat



**Vulnerability scanner:** Software that automatically compares existing common vulnerabilities and exposures against the technologies on the network

**Vulnerability assessment:** The internal review process of a company's security systems

**Vulnerability management:** The process of finding and patching vulnerabilities

## W

**Watering hole attack:** A type of attack when a threat actor compromises a website frequently visited by a specific group of users

**Whaling:** A category of spear phishing attempts that are aimed at high-ranking executives in an organization

**Web-based exploits:** Malicious code or behavior that's used to take advantage of coding flaws in a web application

**Worm:** Malware that can duplicate and spread itself across systems on its own

## Z

**Zero-day:** An exploit that was previously unknown

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